

Rabaglia, R., & D. Twardus. 1990. The Eastern Tent Caterpillar. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. www.fs.fed/na/morgantown/fhp/palerts/etc/etc.

Remsen, J. V., & S. K. Robinson. 1990. A classification scheme for foraging behavior of birds in terrestrial habitats. *Studies in Avian Biology* 13: 144-160.

Swaddle, J. P., M. S. Witter, I. C. Cuthill, A. Budden, & P. McCowen. 1996. Plumage condition affects flight performance in Common Starlings--implications for developmental homeostasis, abrasion, and moult. *Journal of Avian Biology* 27:103-111.

William Moskoff
Box M1
Department of Biology
Lake Forest College
Lake Forest, Illinois 60045

Banisteria, Number 22, 2003
© 2003 by the Virginia Natural History Society

HEILIPUS APIATUS, A STRIKING LARGE WEEVIL NEW TO THE VIRGINIA FAUNA (COLEOPTERA: CURCULIONIDAE)--Collecting beetles for the Virginia Museum of Natural History at First Landing (formerly Seashore) State Park, City of Virginia Beach, during the period of 23 June-7 July 2003, Robert Vigneault obtained three specimens of a large black weevil with extensive white elytral ornamentation. Another specimen from the same locality, collected by Kurt A. Buhlmann of the Virginia Natural Heritage Program in 1989, was found among unidentified material in the VMNH beetle collection.

Reference to the antique but still indispensable manual on the weevils of eastern North America (Blatchley & Leng, 1916) led to identification of the beetle as *Heilipus apiatus* (Olivier, 1807). As evident from the photograph (Fig. 1), this is a stately and impressive insect, unlikely to be mistaken for anything else, and in fact, there are no close relatives in North America although the genus is extravagantly represented by at least 328 nominal species in the Neotropical Region (Blackwelder, 1947).

Blatchley & Leng (1916) mentioned Florida, Tennessee, and Georgia as known states of record. More recent sources have added Florence and Walterboro, South Carolina (Kirk, 1969, 1970), and Raleigh, Windsor, and Southern Pines, North Carolina



Fig. 1. *Heilipus apiatus* from First Landing State Park, City of Virginia Beach; body length = 14 mm (from base of beak to elytral apex) (photograph by Melody Cartwright, VMNH).

(Brimley, 1938); both of these authors used the junior synonym *Heilipus squamosus* LeConte.

Pin label data for North Carolina specimens in the North Carolina State University insect collection (kindly provided by Robert L. Blinn) reflect captures in the following counties and years: Bertie (1934), Brunswick (1954), Craven (1907), Dare (1961), Johnston (1976), Tyrell (1975), and Wake (1938). That these sites are all in the Coastal Plain is not surprising, a more interesting aspect of the data is the fact that no specimens of this large and conspicuous beetle have found their way into that collection since 1976. From the analogy of various other insects with austral distributions that have achieved dramatic northward dispersal in recent decades, one might have suspected that *H. apiatus* would likewise be responding to an apparent "global warming" episode. Just the opposite may have taken place, with the range currently in a state of fragmentation.

In Florida *H. apiatus* is considered a pest on cultivated avocados (Woodruff, 1963). Elsewhere it has been found on sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*) (Blatchley & Leng, 1916), a species in the same family (Lauraceae) that is widespread over most of eastern North America. The distinctly lowland distribution of *H. apiatus* is thus possibly a reflection of some environmental constraints other than host availability, unless, as suggested to me by Warren E. Steiner, the

preferred host might actually be redbay (*Persea borbonia*), a species of Lauraceae with a distribution encompassed by that of *H. apiatus*. One of Mr. Vigneault's specimens came to an ultraviolet light, the others were taken by beating undetermined woody plants, which could have included sassafras or redbay, both common at Virginia Beach. Dr. Buhlmann's specimen was taken in a pitfall trap during the period of 3 August-8 September 1989, establishing a summer-long activity period. That the species occurs as far inland as Raleigh implies a Virginia distribution more extensive than our single locality might suggest. Perhaps collecting efforts focused on the two tree species mentioned above may yield additional information on this interesting beetle.

LITERATURE CITED

- Blackwelder, R. E. 1947. Checklist of the coleopterous insects of Mexico, Central America, the West Indies, and South America. Part V. United States National Museum Bulletin 185: 765-925.
- Blatchley, W. S., & C. W. Leng. 1916. The Rhynchophora or weevils of North Eastern America. The Nature Publishing Company, Indianapolis, IN. 681 pp.
- Brimley, C. S. 1938. The Insects of North Carolina, Being a List of the Insects of North Carolina and their Close Relatives. North Carolina Department of Agriculture, Raleigh, NC. 560 pp.
- Kirk, V. M. 1969. A list of the beetles of South Carolina. Part 1 - Northern Coastal Plain. South Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station Technical Bulletin 1033. 124 pp.
- Kirk, V. M. 1970. A list of the beetles of South Carolina. Part 2 - Mountain, Piedmont, and Southern Coastal Plain. South Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station Technical Bulletin 1038. 115 pp.
- Woodruff, R. E. 1963. An avocado weevil (*Heilipus apiatus* Oliv.) (Coleoptera: Curculionidae). Florida Department of Agriculture, Entomology Circular 11: 1.
- Richard L. Hoffman
Virginia Museum of Natural History
Martinsville, Virginia 24112
- Banisteria*, Number 22, 2003
© 2003 by the Virginia Natural History Society
- PELAGE ANOMALY IN A NORTHERN SHORT-TAILED SHREW, *BLARINA BREVICAUDA*, FROM WEST VIRGINIA -- Pure albinism is rare in insectivores; however, albinism, white spotting or belting has been documented for masked shrews (*Sorex cinereus*), dusky shrews (*Sorex obscurus*), least shrews (*Cryptotis parva*), and northern short-tailed shrews (*Blarina brevicauda*) (Hamilton, 1939; Elder, 1960; Brooks & Doyle, 1994; Long & Gehring, 1995; Moncrief & Anderson, 1997; Bumann & Scanlon, 2002; S. McLaren, pers. comm.). Older short-tailed shrews often display white hairs infrequently throughout the pelage or they may be concentrated into dime-sized spots near the flanks (Hamilton, 1939). Twelve short-tailed shrews with pelage anomalies have been documented in Pennsylvania, most with a single or few white spots (S. McLaren, pers. comm.). Most of these animals were captured over 50 years ago, and only two have been taken in the last 25 years. One of these two was a pure albino short-tailed shrew collected at Powdermill Biological Station, ca. 100 km southeast of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In over 43,000 captures in that project, this was the only short-tailed shrew with a white pelage; no partial albinos were captured (J. Merritt, pers. comm.).
- We captured a northern short-tailed shrew (*Blarina brevicauda*) with partially white pelage. The specimen was captured in a pitfall on 30 May 2001 in a wetland located in the Monongahela National Forest in Tucker Co., West Virginia (39.07238° N; 79.473078° W, ca. 1114 m). The dry pitfall trap was a 964-cm³ plastic drink cup set flush in the ground. The vegetation in this acidic (pH range: 3.3-5.5) shrub-bog was dominated by groundberry (*Rubus* spp.), black chokeberry (*Pyrus melanocarpa*), blueberry (*Vaccinium* spp.), *Polytrichum* moss, and *Sphagnum* moss.
- The specimen weighed 11.0 g, and was identified as a non-lactating female. She had a partial white band, ca. 8 x 15 mm, on the right side, about halfway between the forelegs and hindlegs (Fig. 1). It was photographed and released near the capture point. This specimen was one of 30 northern short-tailed shrews captured in five nights of trapping at this site (1875 trap-nights) using pitfalls, Sherman live traps, and Museum Special snap-traps. We captured 198 northern short-tailed shrews at 19 additional wetland sites in West Virginia and western Maryland in 2001; all exhibited normal pelage coloration.